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ABSTRACT

As part of the Speech Communication Association (SCA) 1990 Summer Conference on Communication Competency Assessment held in Denver, Colorado, one work group worked on the development of a speech performance evaluation form and/or process grounded in and driven by the competency paradigm. Prior to and during the conference, the group developed a description of a manual for in-class speech evaluation at the college sophomore level to be used for both the evaluation of public speaking skills in the classroom, and pre- (testing out) and/or post- (exit) assessment of speaking performance. At the conference, eight competencies regarding public speaking were identified, and performance criteria/standards by which each competency could be evaluated were articluated. Following the conference, a pilot speech evaluation form was developed, utilizing the eight competencies and attendant criteria. That instrument and criteria presently are being refined, and appropriate reliability and validity testing is planned. It is the intention of the work group to develop a manual for speech evaluation grounded in the communication competency literature and containing, among other components, "The Competent Speaker" evaluation form. That manual will be submitted to the Educational Policies Board for SCA approval and distribution. (Three tables of data are included; 27 references and 2 appendixes containing the SCA resolution and a description of the eight public speaking competencies and standards/criteria for assessment are also provided. (SR)

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"THE COMPETENT SPEAKER": Development of a communication-competency based speech evaluation form and manual.*

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ABSTRACT

"THE COMPETENT SPEAKER": Development of a communication-competency based speech evaluation form and manual.

As a part of the SCA 1990 Summer Conference on Communication Competency Assessment held in Denver, Colorado, one work group was assigned a charge to ..."work on the public speaking skills portion of a test of oral communication." After a review of the literature regarding both the speech evaluation process and the oral communication competency paradigm, the group interpreted their to be the development of a speech performance evaluation form and/or process grounded in and driven by the competency paradigm. Prior to and during the summer conference, the group developed a description of a manual for in-class speech evaluation at the college sophomore (grade 14) level to be used for both the evaluation of public speaking skills in the classroom, and pre-(testing out) and/or post (exit) assessment of speaking performance. At the conference, eight competencies regarding public speaking were identified, derived primarily from Communication is Life: Essential College Sophomore Speaking and Listening Competencies, (Quianthy, 1990) and SCA Guidelines: Speaking and Listening Competencies for High School Graduates, (1982). Other popular conceptualizations of speaking competencies also were reviewed in regard to the selection and identification of the Eight Public Speaking Competencies (Rubin, 1982). In addition to identifying the eight competencies associated with public speaking, the group also articulated performance criteria/standard by which each competency could be evaluated. Following the summer conference, a pilot speech evaluation form was developed, utilizing the eight competencies and attendant criteria. That instrument and criteria presently are being refined and appropriate reliability and validity testing is planned. It is the intention of the work group/task force to develop a manual for speech evaluation grounded in the communication competency literature and containing, among other components, The Competent Speaker evaluation form. That manual will be submitted to the Educational Policies Board for SCA approval and distribution.

"THE COMPETENT SPEAKER": DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMUNICATION-COMPETENCY BASED SPEECH EVALUATION FORM AND MANUAL

Product Genesis

As a part of SCA's 1990 Conference on Communication Competency Assessment, one task force was assigned a charge to:

> ... work on the public speaking skills portion of a test of oral communication. A position should be taken on which skills should be assessed, what criteria should be used to assess them, and suggested procedures. Perhaps prototypes should be developed and recommended (Backlund, 1990, p. 1).

Members of the task force addressing this charge included communication scholars from 11 universities from through the country, all of whom possessed extensive background in the speech evaluation process and an active interest in communication competency and its assessment (Morreale, et al. 1990).

Through several months of geographically-dispersed dialogue and negotiation, the task force interpreted the SCA Conference charge to them. The group determined that it was their general charge to develop a speech performance evaluation form and/or process grounded in and driven by the communication competency paradigm, as presently articulated by the communication discipline. Rationale for this interpretation of the task force's charge was based upon two assumptions. First, there is a lack of and need to develop a standardized and adequately tested speech evaluation instrument and/or process for national distribution; second, if such an instrument/process is developed, approved, and distributed by the national Speech Communication Association, it should be grounded in the most timely and efficacious conceptualization of the communication competency paradigm. Based on this rationale,

the task force outlined the form the product would take to accomplish their assigned charge.

Product Description (See Appendix A: SCA Resolution)

The product to be generated will be a manual for in-class speech evaluation at the college sophomore (grade 14) level, that is consistent with and guided in its development by:

1. the communication competency literature and approach to assessment (Backlund, 1983; McCroskey, 1984; Pearson & Daniels, 1988; Rubin,1990; Rubin, et al., 1983; Spitzberg, 1983; Spitzberg, 1987; Spitzberg, 1988; Wiemann & Backlund, 1980); and

2. published and proposed criteria related to the speech evaluation process and assessment of speaking skills (Bock & Bock, 1981; Crocker-Lakness, et al., 1990; Mead & Rubin, 1985; Powers, 1984; Quianthy, 1990 ; Taylor, 1989; Taylor, 1990).

The purposes for which the manual will be utilized are:

1. evaluation of public speaking skills and performance in the classroom; and

2. pre (testing out) and/or post (exit) assessment of public speaking skills and performance in the basic and/or public speaking course.

Following reliability and validity tests of a speech evaluation instrument, an EPB approved manual, containing the instrument, will be available for distribution through the Speech Communication Association.

The manual will contain the following components:

Part I

1. Statements of rationale for a communication competency approach

to in-class evaluation and for SCA distributed instruments for speech evaluation.

2. Statement of policy for use of manual.

Part II

1. Speech Evaluation Instrument, "The Competent Speaker".

2. List of Public Speaking Competencies and criteria/standards for assessment of each competency.

3. Methods and procedures for assessment of the communication competencies and use of the instrument.

a. Analytic Method

b. Holistic Method

Part III

1. Statement of rationale for stored feedback system.

2. Computerized critique comments for each of the competencies included on the evaluation instrument.

Part IV

Selected readings and annotated bibliography.

Part V

Anchors or videotaped examples of the varying gradations of performance identified for the competencies.

Process of Product Development

After an extensive review of scholarly literature regarding communication competency and its assessment, the major component of the manual to be developed appeared to be a prototype of a speech evaluation form grounded in the reviewed literature. Development of the prototype would involve: selection of the competencies to be assessed, articulation of the criteria/standards

by which to assess those competencies, and design of a pilot form that the prototype instrument would take.

First, regarding competencies selection, the examination of literature revealed the great extent to which communication competency had become a significant theoretical and pedagogical referent with respect to communication instruction and its evaluation and measurement.(particularly see Rubin, 1990 and Spitzberg, 1988 for recent discussion and review of the construct). This interest in communication competency as an evaluative construct is especially evident in publications and resources of the Speech Communication Association such as: Developing Communication competence in Children (Allen and Brown, 1976), Development of Functional Communication Competencies: Pre-K to Grades 6 and Grades 7-12 (Wood, 1977), Assessing Functional Communication (Larson, et al., 1978), Communication Competency Assessment Instrument (Rubin, 1982), SCA Guidelines: Speaking and Listening Competencies for High School Graduates (1982), Communication for Careers: Oral Communication Competencies Needed by Community College Graduates Entering Careers (1982), Communication Competencies for Teachers (1988), and the more recent Communication is Life: Essential College Sophomore Speaking and Listening Competencies (Quianthy, 1990).

While the precise nature of communication competence is still being debated, there appears to be general agreement that it is comprised of at least three factors corresponding to Bloom's (1964a, 1964b) taxonomy of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Allen and Brown, 1976; Spitzberg, 1983;). (see Crocker-

Lakness, 1990 for a recent conceptualization) Similarly, while a definitive list of communication competencies has yet to be agreed upon, significant progress has been made in recent years. Notable is the list of speaking and listening competencies, developed earlier but expanded during the 1987 Wingspread Conference, sponsored by the Speech Communication Association (Quianthy, 1990). That conference refined a list of speaking and listening competencies and developed corresponding instructional strategies for those competencies. However, neither a list of assessment standards/criteria nor assessment instruments for in-class performance, particularly speaking performance, were developed.

At the SCA 1990 Conference on Assessment, the present task force identified eight public speaking competencies and performance criteria/standards for the assessment of each competency (See Appendix B: Competencies and Criteria). The list of public speaking competencies identified by the task force are consistent with and derived from the public speaking performance competencies (skills) listed in Communication is Life: Essential College Sophomore Speaking and Listening Competencies, (Quianthy, 1990), and SCA Guidelines: Speaking and Listening Competencies for High School Graduates, (1982). The essential college sophomore exit level speaking competencies were reviewed to ascertain that they subsumed all of the speaking competencies listed for the high school graduate. Table 1 lists the college sophomore competencies and Table 2 the high school competencies.

Table 1

Speaking Competencies listed in "Communication is Life: Essential College Sophomore Speaking and Listening Competencies," (Quianthy, 1990)

- Determine the purpose of oral discourse.
- Choose a topic and restrict it according to the purpose and audience.
- Fulfill the purpose of oral discourse by formulating a thesis statement, providing adequate support material, selecting a suitable organization pattern, demonstrating careful choice of words, providing effective transitions, and demonstrating suitable interpersonal skills.
- Employ vocal variety in rate, pitch, and intensity.
- Articulate clearly.
- Employ the level of American English appropriate to the designated audience.
- Demonstrate nonverbal behavior that supports the verbal message.

Table 2

Speaking Competencies listed in "SCA Guidelines: Speaking and Listening Competencies for High School Graduates," (1982).

Use words, pronunciation, and grammar appropriate for situation.

Use nonverbal signs appropriate for situation.

Use voice effectively.

Express ideas clearly and concisely.

Express and defend with evidence your point of view.

Organize (order) message so that others can understand them.

Summarize messages.

The compilation and distillation of the two lists of speaking competencies, outlined in Tables 1 and 2, resulted in the identification of eight public speaking competencies that were then reworded and refined by all members of the task force/subcommittee.

Table 3

"The Competent Speaker": Eight Public Speaking Competencies (Morreale et al., 1990).

Competency One
CHOOSES AND NARROWS A TOPIC APPROPRIATELY FOR THE AUDIENCE AND OCCASION

Competency Two
STATES THE THESIS/SPECIFIC PURPOSE IN A MANNER APPROPRIATE FOR AUDIENCE AND OCCASION

Competency Three
PROVIDES APPROPRIATE SUPPORTING MATERIAL BASED ON THE AUDIENCE AND OCCASION

Competency Four
USES AN ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERN APPROPRIATE TO TOPIC, AUDIENCE, OCCASION, & PURPOSE

Competency Five
USES LANGUAGE THAT IS APPROPRIATE TO THE AUDIENCE AND OCCASION

Competency Six
USES VOCAL VARIETY IN RATE, PITCH, & INTENSITY, TO HEIGHTEN & MAINTAIN INTEREST

Competency Seven
USES PRONUNCIATION, GRAMMAR, & ARTICULATION APPROPRIATE TO THE DESIGNATED AUDIENCE

Competency Eight
USES PHYSICAL BEHAVIORS THAT SUPPORT THE VERBAL MESSAGE

Following identification of the eight public speaking competencies, the task force developed performance standards or criteria by which each competency could be evaluated or measured (See Appendix B). That development of standards/criteria was based upon further review of the aforementioned competency assessment literature as well as published guidelines for speech evaluation (Bock and Bock, 1981; Mead and Rubin; Powers, 1984). It should be noted that the public speaking competencies, and more particularly

the standards/criteria for their assessment, are in a pilot stage of development and testing. The task force intends extensive revision, particularly of the criteria, based upon their pragmatic and pedagogical value to the speech evaluation process.

After development of the eight competencies and attendent evaluative criteria, the task force next generated a speech performance evaluation form, "The Competent Speaker" (See Appendix C). The resultant "pilot" evaluation instrument takes a structured as opposed to an unobtrusive observational approach and utilizes a tri-level analytic scale as a rating system to assess varying levels of competence (Mead and Rubin, 1985). Earlier published SCA guidelines for constructing a speech evaluation instrument, (Boch and Boch, 1981, pp. 21-22), were considered, particularly regarding scale construction and controlling for rater errors. Additionally, National College Board recommendations for development of measures of speaking and listening (Powers, 1984, p. 7), were observed. The College Board's recommendations regarding psychometric requirements for reliability validity, and test fairness will be attended to as a part of future research activities and investigation of the instrument.

Future Directions and Recommendations

Presently, there is a resolution before the SCA Committee on Assessment and Testing and the Educational Policies Board of SCA requesting that: "a CAT subcommittee be charged to continue the development and testing of an EPB sponsored and SCA distributed manual for in-class speech evaluation at the college sophomore (grade 14) level" (See Appendix A). Given approval of that

resolution, the subcommittee will:

1. continue to refine the speech evaluation instrument based on the identified competencies;
2. conduct appropriate research to test the validity and reliability of the instrument; and
3. prepare the manual as described, for approval by the EPB and distribution by SCA.

The future research and development of the instrument will include but not be limited to the following efforts:

- o test-retest and inter-rater reliability testing of the instrument on various campuses;
- o testing for variability in the weighing of the eight competencies by various raters;
- o validity testing of the instrument, particularly regarding construct validity;
- o developing holistic instructions, as well as the analytic instrument, for use of the eight identified competencies;
- o developing computerized critique comments for each of the eight competencies for use with an attendent stored feedback system;
- o developing video taped anchors for each of the levels or gradations of competency explicated for the eight competencies.

All of these research and development efforts will adhere to the proposed 1990 SCA Policy on Criteria for the Assessment of Oral Communication (Crocker-Lakness, 1990). In that proposed policy statement, it is indicated that any communication competency

assessment process or instrument should address the three factors involved in competency: knowledge, skills, and attitudes. It should be noted that the evaluation instrument and manual described in the present paper is limited to assessing the behavioral (performance) dimension of public speaking competence. In recognition of the multi-factorial/dimensional nature of communication competency, it is recommended that other future research and development address the cognitive and affective factors involved in public speaking. That recommendation aside, the development of the present instrument, "The Competent Speaker," along with its assessment criteria and manual for use, should lead to greater consistency and increased quality in terms of speech evaluation in the communication classroom. By applying the literature generated within the communication competency movement to a standardized and tested speech evaluation form, the process of speech instruction and criticism will be further enhanced.

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APPENDIX A

A RESOLUTION SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL

TO: The SCA Committee on Assessment and Testing
SCA National Convention, November, 1990

FROM: Subcommittee charged "with the responsibility to develop and test an EPB sponsored and SCA distributed manual for in-class evaluation of public speaking skills at the college sophomore level."

Subcommittee Co-Chairs: Sherry Morreale and Phil Taylor
Committee Members: Conrad Awtry, Jim Bradford, Pat Comeaux, Jean DeWitt, Faye Clark, Michael Moore, Joyce Swofford, Karolyn Yocum

WHEREAS this subcommittee has met, discussed, and considered the above charge, in response, the members set forth the following rationale, resolution, product description, and procedural recommendations.

RATIONALE

An examination of scholarly literature of the last fifteen years reveals the extent to which communication competence has become a significant theoretical and pedagogical construct with respect to communication instruction and assessment. While a definitive list of communication competencies has yet to agreed upon, significant progress has been made in recent years toward academic consensus regarding the construct. Notable is a list of competencies developed earlier but expanded during the 1987 Wingspread Conference sponsored by SCA. That conference refined a list of speaking and listening competencies and developed corresponding instructional strategies for those competencies. However, neither a list of assessment standards/criteria nor assessment instruments for in-class performance, particularly speaking performance, have been developed. The need remains to develop a simple and pragmatic instrument, or set of instruments, to assess in-class speaking performance. The development of such instrument(s) would enhance the value of the list of competencies which are currently available through SCA and would be consistent with the emergent competency movement within the communication discipline. Additionally, such standardized instruments, if available and distributed through SCA, should lead to higher quality and greater consistency in public speaking instruction and evaluation in the communication classroom.

In response to (1) the general need to develop standardized instrumentation to assess in-class performance and (2) the specific charge regarding public speaking skills evaluation, the following resolution and product description are offered.

2. Computerized critique comments for each of the competencies included on the evaluation instrument.

PART IV

Selected readings and an annotated bibliography.

PART V

Anchors or videotaped examples of the varying gradations of performance identified for the eight competencies.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

At the SCA 1990 Conference on Assessment, the subcommittee completed the rationale for its product and identified eight public speaking competencies and performance criteria/standards for the assessment of each competency. The list of public speaking competencies identified by the subcommittee are based upon and consistent with the public speaking performance competencies (skills) listed in Communication is Life: Essential College Sophomore Speaking and Listening Competencies, (1990), and SCA Guidelines: Speaking and Listening Competencies for High School Graduates, (1982). The essential college sophomore speaking competencies were reviewed to ascertain that they subsumed all of the speaking competencies listed for the high school graduate. The compilation and distillation of these two lists of speaking competencies resulted in the identified eight public speaking competencies that were then refined by all members of the subcommittee. The performance criteria/standards for the assessment of each competency are based upon a comprehensive review of the literature concerning communication competence and public speaking assessment. The speech evaluation form, utilizing the eight competencies and attendant criteria, was developed by the subcommittee subsequent to the 1990 conference.

Given approval of the present resolution, the subcommittee will:
1. continue to refine the speech evaluation instrument based on the identified competencies; 2. conduct appropriate research to test the validity and reliability of the instrument;
and 3. prepare the manual, as described, for approval by the EPB and distribution by SCA. These three efforts will be based upon the proposed 1990 SCA Policy on Criteria for the Assessment of Oral Communication.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The subcommittee acknowledges and reminds the Committee on Assessment and Testing that their charge is limited exclusively to the behavioral (performance) dimension of public speaking competence. In recognition of the multi-factorial nature of communication competency, this subcommittee recommends that CAT charge an additional task force to address the cognitive and affective factors involved in assessing public speaking competence.

REFERENCES

Crocker-Lakness, J. et al. (1990). Proposed SCA Policy on Criteria for the Assessment of Oral Communication. A Resolution proposed at the SCA Summer Conference on Communication Competency Assessment. Denver, CO.

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RESOLUTION #1 (to be included in CAT summary of resolutions from the Summer, 1990 Conference)

A CAT subcommittee be charged with the responsibility to continue the development and testing of an EPB sponsored and SCA distributed manual for in-class speech evaluation at the college sophomore (grade 14) level, that is consistent with (1) the communication competency literature and approach to assessment and (2) the proposed SCA Policy on Criteria for the Assessment of Oral Communication. The general purposes of the manual will be (1) evaluation of public speaking skills and performance in the classroom, and (2) pre (testing out) and/or post (exit) assessment of public speaking skills and performance in the basic and/or public speaking course.

"THE COMPETENT SPEAKER"

Eight Public Speaking Competencies and
Standards/Criteria for Assessment

Competency One

CHOOSES AND NARROWS A TOPIC APPROPRIATELY FOR THE AUDIENCE AND OCCASION

EXCELLENT=3. The speaker effectively limits and balances presentation based on considerations of purpose, time constraints, and audience.
SATISFACTORY=2. The speaker provides a presentation that needs improvement in limitation and balance based on considerations of purpose, time constraints, and audience.
UNSATISFACTORY=1. The speaker does not present a balanced presentation based on considerations of purpose, time constraints, and audience.

Competency Two

STATES THE THESIS/SPECIFIC PURPOSE IN A MANNER APPROPRIATE FOR THE AUDIENCE AND OCCASION.

EXCELLENT=3. The speaker clearly provides a thesis statement and/or specific purpose appropriate for the purpose, audience, and occasion.
SATISFACTORY=2. The speaker provides a thesis and/or specific purpose that lacks substance, focus, and/or clarity.
UNSATISFACTORY=1. The speaker does not provide an identifiable thesis statement and/or specific purpose.

Competency Three

PROVIDES APPROPRIATE SUPPORTING MATERIAL BASED ON THE AUDIENCE AND OCCASION.

EXCELLENT=3. The speaker uses extensive supporting material based on considerations of quality, quantity, and variety.
SATISFACTORY=2. The speaker uses suporting material limited in quality, quantity, and/or variety.
UNSATISFACTORY=1. The speaker uses little or no supporting material.

Competency Four

USES AN ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERN APPROPRIATE TO THE TOPIC, AUDIENCE, OCCASION AND PURPOSE.

EXCELLENT=3. The speaker uses an exceptional introduction and conclusion and provides an exceptionally clear and logical progression within and between ideas.

SATISFACTORY=2. The speaker uses a functional introduction and conclusion and provides a reasonably clear and logical progression within and between ideas.

UNSATISFACTORY=1. The speaker fails to use an introduction and conclusion and fails to provide a reasonably clear and logical progression within and between ideas.

Competency Five

USES LANGUAGE THAT IS APPROPRIATE TO THE AUDIENCE AND OCCASION.

EXCELLENT=3. The speaker uses language that is exceptionally clear, vivid, free of jargon and avoids all forms of prejudice.

SATISFACTORY=2. The speaker uses language that is reasonably clear and avoids all forms of prejudice.

UNSATISFACTORY=1. The speaker uses unclear language, jargon, or prejudiced language.

Competency Six

USES VOCAL VARIETY IN RATE, PITCH, AND INTENSITY (VOLUME) TO HEIGHTEN AND MAINTAIN INTEREST.

EXCELLENT=3. The speaker makes excellent use of vocal variety in a conversational mode; that is, exceptionally well paced, easily heard by all audience members, and varied in pitch to enhance the message.

SATISFACTORY=2. The speaker makes satisfactory use of vocal variety in a conversational mode; that is, well paced but shows occasional weaknesses in variety, too fast or too slow, too soft or too loud, monotonous or exaggerated variety.

UNSATISFACTORY=1. The speaker makes unsatisfactory use of vocal variety and fails to speak in a conversational mode; that is, inadequate use of one or more of the vocal descriptors in such a way as to interfere with the message.

Competency Seven

USES PRONUNCIATION, GRAMMAR, AND ARTICULATION APPROPRIATE TO THE DESIGNATED AUDIENCE.

EXCELLENT-3. The speaker has excellent articulation, standard pronunciation, and correct grammar usage: that is, properly formed sounds enhance the speaker's message, no pronunciation or grammatical errors.

SATISFACTORY-2. The speaker has satisfactory articulation, and few pronunciation and/or grammatical errors; that is, most sounds are properly formed, few (1-2)minor errorsin standard pronunciation and/or grammar usage.

UNSATISFACTORY-3. The speaker has unsatisfactory articuation, and major pronunciation and/or grammatical errors; that is, nonfluencies interfere with the message, use of nonstandard pronunciation and/or incorrect grammar throughout the speech.

Competency Eight

USES PHYSICAL BEHAVIORS THAT SUPPORT THE VERBAL MESSAGE.

EXCELLENT-3. The speaker demonstrates excellent posture, gestures, and facial expressions that support the message; that is, appropriate kinesic elements (posture, gesture, facial expressions), proxemic elements (interpersonal distance and spatial arrangement), and dress.

SATISFACTORY-2. The speaker demonstrates satisfactory use of posture gestures, and facial expressions that support the message; that is, appropriate kinesic elements (posture, gesture, facial expressions), proxemic elements (interpersonal distance and spatial arrangement), and dress, with minor inconsistencies that do not interfere with the message.

UNSATISFACTORY-1. The speaker demonstrates unsatisfactory use of posture, gestures, and facial expressions that are incongruent with the verbal intent; that is, inappropriate kinesic elements (posture, gesture, facial expressions), proxemic elements (interpersonal distance and spatial arrangement), and dress, that distract the audience to the point that the speaker's message is lost.